

## *Africa Command*

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#### **Introduction**

Over the past year we have listened and learned lessons about this transformational refocusing of DoD priorities and the stand-up of U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM); however, USAFRICOM's primary purpose and the vision it is intended to fulfill has not changed. Stability and prosperity in Africa are important to the long-term interests of the United States as a stable, healthy, and more prosperous Africa will contribute to global security and a stronger world economy.

Many of Africa's security challenges are not limited by country boundaries, but are transnational in nature, many having grown out of what once were essentially local security issues. African governments and institutions are turning to collective security mechanisms to address these challenges, and our military engagement with Africa needs to reflect these African transformations at the regional level.

In many ways, the creation of Africa Command is an historic opportunity for DoD to "catch-up" to Africa's quickly evolving continental and regional security structures, and their increasing capacities to address the significant security challenges on the continent. USAFRICOM represents an opportunity to strengthen and expand U.S. and African security relationships in such a way that our combined efforts can help generate a more indigenous and, therefore, more sustainable peace and security on the continent. USAFRICOM also is a manifestation of how DoD is innovating to transform its ability, institutionally, to meet the challenges of the new global security environment.

#### **Strengthening our Relationships with Africans**

USAFRICOM's military engagement on the African continent will remain primarily focused on building partnership capacities, conducting theater security cooperation, building important counter-terrorism skills and, as appropriate, supporting U.S. Government agencies in implementing other programs to promote regional stability. For many years our military relationships on the continent have been implemented by three separate commands: U.S. European Command, U.S. Central Command and U.S. Pacific Command. While these commands executed their missions well, USAFRICOM presents an opportunity to eliminate the bureaucratic divisions and operational seams created by the former organizational structure. We expect USAFRICOM will allow DoD civilian

and military leaders to take a more holistic and operationally efficient approach to the opportunities and challenges that lay ahead as Africa's multilateral institutions, such as the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities, figure more prominently in African security affairs. Consolidation under one command has the potential to better support the development of these important regional mechanisms and relationships.

### **USAFRICOM's Innovations**

USAFRICOM is an innovative command in several ways. First, unlike a traditional Unified Command, it will focus on building African regional security and crisis response capacity. USAFRICOM will promote greater security ties between the United States and Africa, providing new opportunities to enhance our bi-lateral military relationships, and strengthen the capacities of Africa's regional and sub-regional organizations.

Second, USAFRICOM will include a significant and carefully selected number of representatives from other U.S. agencies within its staff, including officers from the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). A variety of agencies have existing bilateral relationships with African governments – relationships focusing on everything from collaborating to promote aviation safety to working with local NGOs to develop conflict mediation programs targeted at youth. These interagency officers will contribute their knowledge and expertise to the command so that USAFRICOM will be more effective in supporting peacekeeping capacity, the broader security sector, and, when appropriate, in supporting other U.S. Government agencies and African governments in humanitarian assistance and disaster response. They will also help USAFRICOM identify ways that DoD can support other U.S. Government departments and agencies' initiatives in Africa. The response and support from the interagency, both in collaboration and participation, has been outstanding.

Third, USAFRICOM, currently in Stuttgart, Germany, is a staff headquarters, not a troop headquarters. It is being made up of roughly one half civilian and one half military personnel, and the Commander has both a military and a civilian deputy. The Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Affairs (DCMA) is a Senior Foreign Service officer from the Department of State. This civilian deputy is responsible for the planning and oversight of the majority of USAFRICOM's security assistance work. The leadership of a State Department officer at this senior level will also enhance USAFRICOM's ability to support such State Department-funded endeavors as the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, a mainstay of the U.S. effort to build peace support operations capacity in Africa.

Fourth, recognizing that USAFRICOM's focus is on war-prevention rather than war-fighting, the inner-workings of the command have been organized to best position it for theatre security cooperation activities with a goal of preventing problems from becoming crises and preventing crises from becoming catastrophes.

### **AFRICOM Myths v Reality**

There are many misconceptions about what USAFRICOM will look like and what it will do. I would like to address these misperceptions and concerns here.

First, some believe that we are establishing USAFRICOM solely to fight terrorism, to secure oil resources, or to discourage China. These are misperceptions. Violent extremism is cause for concern, and needs to be addressed, but this is not USAFRICOM's singular mission. Natural resources such as oil represent Africa's current and future wealth; we seek a secure market environment, in which we can compete fairly and benefit along with all other participants in that global market. Ironically, the U.S., China and other countries share a common interest – a secure environment - and could potentially cooperate on programs which help guarantee that security. USAFRICOM's vision is to assist Africans to build greater capacity to assure that security.

Second, some have raised the concern that USAFRICOM will take control of issues that are the responsibility of the Africans themselves. Our intent is quite the contrary. DoD recognizes and applauds the leadership role that individual African nations and multi-lateral African organizations are taking in the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent. For example, USAFRICOM can provide effective training, advisory and technical support to the development of the African Standby Force. This is exactly the type of initiative and leadership needed to address the diverse and unpredictable global security challenges the world currently faces. The purpose of USAFRICOM is to encourage and support such African leadership and initiative, not to compete with it or to discourage it. U.S. security is enhanced when African nations themselves endeavor to successfully address and resolve emergent security issues before they become so serious that they require considerable international resources and intervention to resolve.

Finally, there are fears that USAFRICOM represents a militarization of U.S. foreign policy in Africa and that USAFRICOM will somehow become the lead U.S. Government interlocutor with Africa. This fear is unfounded. USAFRICOM will support, not shape, U.S. foreign policy on the continent. The Secretary of State remains the chief foreign policy advisor to the President, and the Secretary of Defense remains the chief advisor on defense matters. The creation of a single U.S. DoD point of contact for Africa will simply allow DoD to better coordinate its own efforts, in support of State Department leadership, to better build security capacity in Africa. The intent is not for DoD generally, or for USAFRICOM at the operational-level, to assume the lead in areas where State and/or USAID have clear lines of authority as well as the comparative advantages to lead. Chief of Mission authorities will remain as they are, as will the authorities pertaining to Combatant Commanders. DoD will seek to provide support, as appropriate and as necessary, to help the broader U.S. Government national security goals and objectives succeed.

## **Conclusion**

As USAFRICOM works toward Unified Command Status (UCS) on September 30, 2008, it continues to evolve and adapt. Even after UCS, we can expect potential changes in

structure and manning as it fine-tunes and enhances its ability to perform its primary mission of conflict prevention. Although the bulk of its headquarters will remain off the African continent, a USAFRICOM presence there will be important. An on-continent presence, however, will need to be established in consultation with African partners and in accordance with U.S. policy interests. The establishment of USAFRICOM – and the participation of State, USAID, and other U.S. agencies – demonstrates the importance the U.S. Government places on strengthening ties with Africa. To accomplish this, USAFRICOM will need to be appropriately funded to ensure a successful standup and to fully execute its mission at UCS. With USAFRICOM, the United States will be working in partnership with Africans to foster an environment of security and peace – an environment that will enable Africans themselves to further strengthen their democracies, institutionalize respect for human rights, pursue economic prosperity, and build effective regional institutions. A more stable Africa serves the goal of helping to foster a more stable global environment.